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all, adapted to their needs, ought to confine itself strictly to the mere rudiments, and to aim at imparting a precise and unhesitating knowledge of them,—hardly to be acquired, we think, except by considerable drill in translating into French, much more, certainly, than Professor Joynes provides.

On its own lines the work is well done, and some of its minor features are quite felicitous. The systematic combination of reading with the grammar, from the very beginning, the judicious detailed treatment of the verb in connection with the other topics, the parallel introduction of the three conjugations, and numerous practical hints, bearing the evident stamp of classroom experience, are commendable features and are, in the main, innovations.

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The Phillips Exeter Lectures. Biography. REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS, D. D. Boston: Ginn & Co., 1893.

This lecture was delivered before the students of Phillips Exeter academy, and is published in pamphlet form at the request of many teachers. To make an abstract of it is like crushing a rose, but its suggestions are valuable to every secondary teacher, and the fragrance may not be wholly lost.

To young men, the two worlds—the world of books and the world of men—are freshly and delightfully opening. Biography, the literature of life, brings these two worlds together. The writing of a biography, or the proper reading of it, requires the power of a large, vital imagination, the power of conceiving life as a whole. The great book of the world, the New Testament, is a biography. Make it a mere book of dogmas, and its vitality is gone. The living, the total life, of Jesus, is the world's salvation.

1. The subject of biographies. The *intrinsic* life of any human being, if it can be simply and sympathetically put in words, will be interesting to others. This truth accounts for the power of the simplest kind of biographies. Of two such books, one is the "Story of Ida," the life of an Italian girl of exquisite character, with an introduction by Mr. Ruskin; the other is Thomas Hughes' "Memoirs of a Brother," the story of a brave, consecrated life.

Biographies of the first class are of those rare men who present broad pictures of the healthiest and simplest qualities of human nature more largely and attractively displayed, men of universal inspiration and appeal. Of such, the two best ever written in the English language are Boswell's "Johnson," and Lockhart's "Scott." Happy the boy who early gets at those two books.

A distinctly different type of biographies consists of those which illustrate a period of history, or a special stage of human life. Of all such books for us Americans, the greatest must be Irving's "Life of Washington." Washington was not cold, unromantic, passionless. It was not the lack of qualities, but the poise of qualities that made him calm. Read also Wirt's "Life of Patrick Henry." For English life in the fifteenth century, read the "Life of Cardinal Wolsey," by his gentleman usher, George Cavendish, and the "Life of Walter Raleigh," by an anonymous enthusiastic biographer of his own time. To understand the great English Revolution, you must get deep into the life of Oliver Cromwell.

As an age, or event, no one occupation or profession reveals itself in a biography. Would you know what a soldier is? Read the pages which our great American soldier wrote, in the days in which he so piteously begged of death a little time to tell the story of his life. To understand the true life of a pure scholar, read the delightful story of "Casaubon," by Mark Pattison, or the "Life of Richard Bentley," by Bishop Monk, the very model of a scholar's life of a scholar. For the life of a minister, take Brooke's "Life of Robertson;" of the healthiest of naturalists, "Frank Buckland;" of adventurers, "Livingstone."

Another class of biographies gives us types of characters. Of such are Lord Herbert, of Cherbury's "Memoirs," and Leslie Stephens' noble story of his friend, Henry Fawcett, the blind statesman. The three best religious biographies, are those of Havelock, Patterson, and Ellen Watson. Some great men are unsuited for biography. Their lives are in their works. For this reason, the young reader ought to become accustomed to reading the whole works of an author whom he really wants to know. The poet's life is in his poems. If you read his masterpieces, you know them. If you read his works, you know him.

2. Now of the men who write biographies. English literature is rich in autobiography. The first place is given to the autobiography of Gibbon. But a greater than Gibbon's is that of our own Benjamin Franklin. Franklin had exactly the genius and temperament of an autobiographer. Of the autobiographies of our own time three are full of characteristic life. There is John Stuart Mill's, so cold, and calm, and clear, yet with the warmth of subdued passion in it; the story of James Nasmyth, the Scotch engineer, the happiest life, in the most natural elements of happiness, that one can find; and the autobiography of General Grant, written in a style which has this great quality, that it is like a simple, brave, true man's talk.

Next to autobiography, comes the life written by one near to the subject. Of such there is no happier, or more fascinating, instance, than the "Memoir of Professor Agassiz," by his wife.

Arthur Stanley, the pupil, wrote the life of Dr. Arnold, his teacher; and school-teaching owes no little of its new attractiveness, to that delightful book. In contrast with these are placed two, written by authors far removed from their subjects: the noble biography of Lord Laurence, by Bosworth Smith, the quiet schoolmaster of Harrow; and Professor Masson's "Life of John Milton."

3. The readers of biographies. The reader must bring to his reading, a true life of his own. The object is not imitation, but inspiration. The danger is lest he who reads shall lose himself, shall come to be, not himself, but the feeble repetition of some other man. Read for light and intensity, for sympathy and breadth. The effect on personal character is great. No kind of book helps us so much as a good biography. The supreme blessing of biography is that it is always bathing the special in the universal, and so renewing its vitality and freshness.

O. B. R.

Literature Primers, Chaucer. By ALFRED W. POLLARD, M. A.
Macmillan & Co.: London and New York. pp. 142.

This is an excellent introduction to the study of one of the most delightful of English poets. It ranks favorably with Dowden's "Shakspeare Primer," Jebb's "Greek Literature," and Stopford Brooke's "Primer of English Literature" in thoroughness and sanity of criticism, although it lacks the charm of style which characterizes Mr. Brooke's Primer. It is encouraging to read in confirmation of Matthew Arnold's prophecy: "Today Chaucer has more readers and more lovers than at any previous time and every year increases their number." The author anticipates the criticism that this little book is not "written quite so simply as might be wished" on account of the many Chaucerian controversies which are not dead yet.

A useful hint is found for beginners in Chaucer: "The number of words now obsolete in the prologue to the 'Canterbury Tales' is unusually high, and for this reason it should not be read the first among Chaucer's poems; nevertheless it usually is read first." Another helpful suggestion is the reference to "a useful little book by Mr. Saunders, entitled 'Chaucer's Canterbury Tales.'" Of this interesting as well as useful, but not especially little, book a new and revised edition has just been issued.

Mr. Pollard gives Chaucer high rank as an artist: "As an artist, a master of his craft, Chaucer has no superior; for sustained beauty, for continuous charm, his verse has never been surpassed. Alone among English poets he possesses the art of narration in its perfection."